Erosion from Sinkhole Closes State Route 35 In Rural San Mateo County

Updated: March 15, 2019

Update: The past week has been sunny, allowing work crews to make a lot of progress. The sheet pile retaining wall was completed over 10 day ago. Caltrans wants to open the southbound lane to one-way traffic control. Part of the southbound lane (as well as the entire northbound lane) was eroded by the heavy rains. Caltrans is widening the southbound lane to accommodate a full lane of traffic. Rainy weather has precluded this, as the mud will not allow widening, let alone paving.

The sunny weather has allowed progress and there's a chance that the road would reopen towards the end of the week beginning March 17, 2019, coincidently St. Patrick's Day. With the luck o' the Irish, good weather will prevail, and the road will open.

Please check the Quickmap or use the search engine from the Caltrans District 4 homepage to see updates.

A sinkhole on State Route 35, also known as Skyline Boulevard, in rural San Mateo County caused Caltrans to close both directions of the two-lane highway on Sunday, February 3, 2019. Within two days the pavement on northbound lane of Route 35 had sunk six-feet below southbound lane. The road remains closed.

The closure in located one mile south of Page Mill Road and

two miles north of the State Route 9. The closest town is La Honda.

Portable messages signs have been placed at key location to advise motorists of the closures.

Caltrans maintenance crews inspecting the area around 8:00 AM on Sunday, February 3, 2019, noticed subsidence in the pavement and kept an eye on the area throughout the morning. Around noon Caltrans closed the road. By the next day a large sinkhole had swallowed most of the northbound lanes.

Monday morning, February 4, 2019

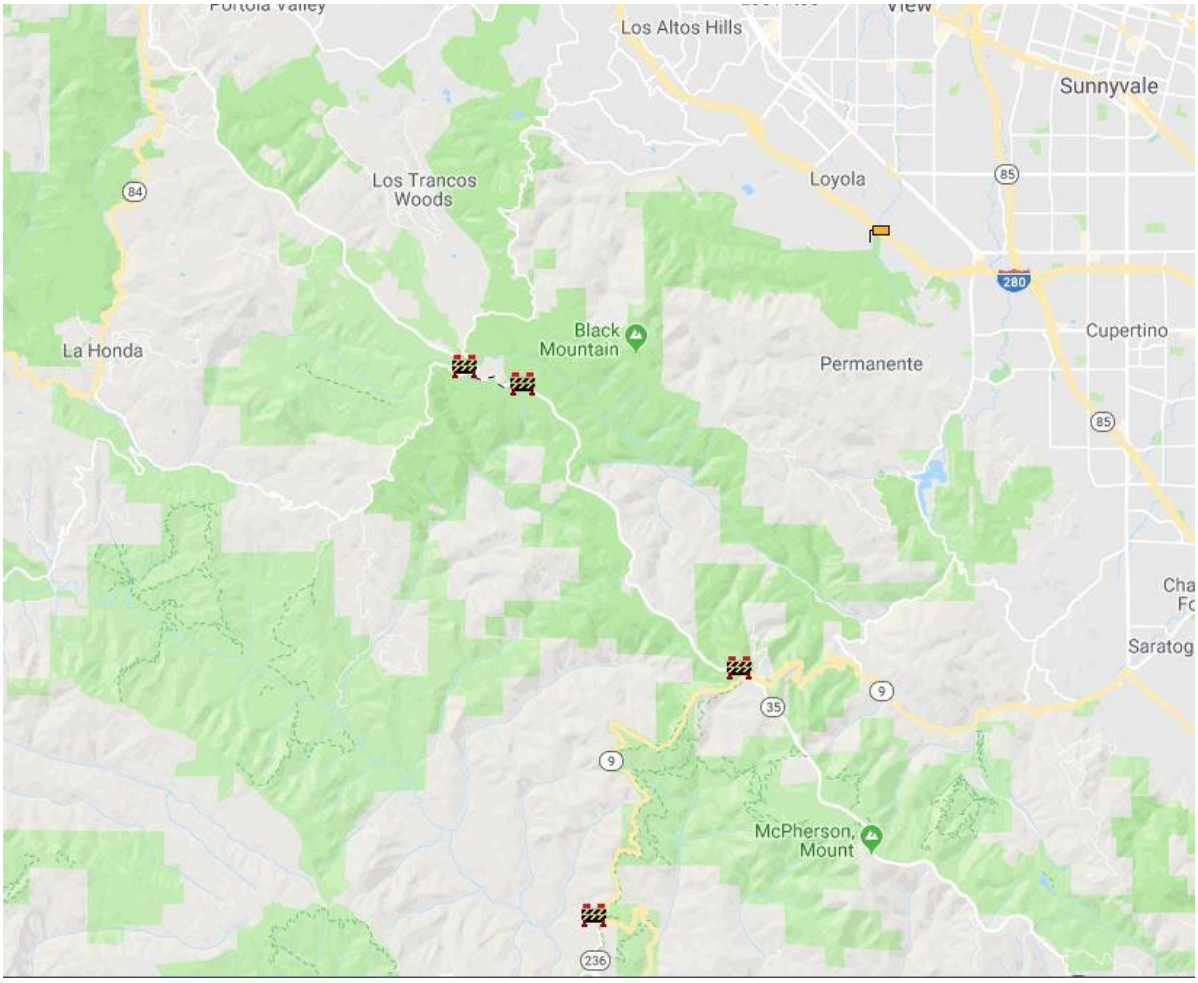
Caltrans activated an emergency contractor with Golden Gate Construction, who arrived onsite the following day. Workers began driving sheet piles, interlocking them to form an underground retaining wall that will support the southbound lane.

Two traffic signals and an electrical system have been brought to the worksite. Caltrans will assemble a traffic signal to be placed several hundred feet to the north and south of the sinkhole. Once the sheet pile retaining wall is completed, Caltrans will activate the signals for one-way traffic control.

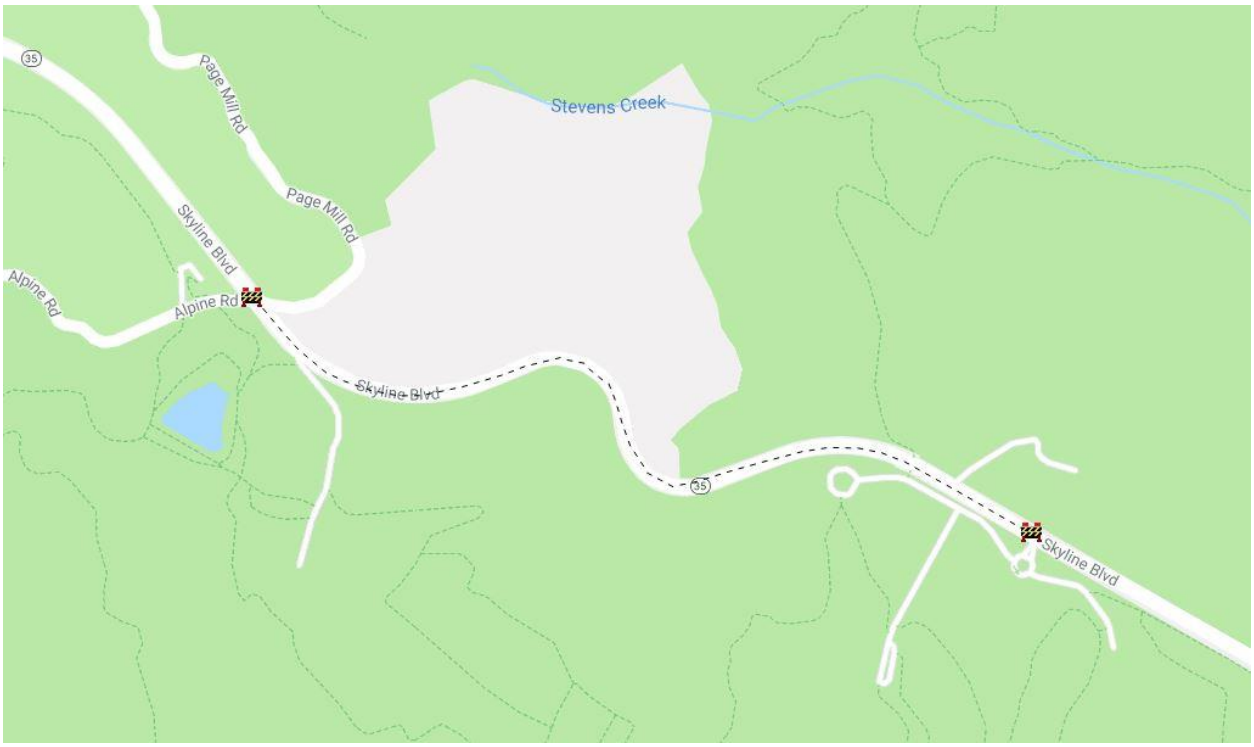
Sheet piles being driven into the ground near the centerline. The interlocking piles will form a subsurface retaining wall, stabilizing the southbound lane (left). After the sheet pile wall is in place, Caltrans will widen the southbound lane, install traffic signals and open the road to one-way traffic control.

Caltrans estimates that the road will open to one-way traffic by the end of February. Go to the Caltrans Quickmap or the Current Conditions search engine to check for updates. (Scroll down just below the fold).

As for a permanent solution, Caltrans is studying the geology and hydrology of the location and designing a retaining wall. When the retaining wall is complete the road will be opened to two-way traffic. Once the design is competed, Caltrans can give a timeline for the construction of the retaining wall.



The red H-shaped icons are barricades representing the location of closures and portable message signs. Three of the closures are " soft" closures, meaning the local traffic can pass through with the understanding Route 35 is impassable south of Alpine/Page Mill Road.



The barrier in the upper left warns motorist that Route 35 is closed a mile to the souheast. The barrier located in the lowr right corner is the location of the sinkhole. The road is impassable at that point.

A week after the sinkhole appeared the northbound lane had completely eroded.